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DORCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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CATALOGUE

OF

CIVIL WAR RELICS

1862 — 1863 — 1864

OLD BLAKE HOUSE

COLUMBIA ROAD

DORCHESTER, MASS.

Open Tuesdays and Saturdays 2 to 5 P. M.

OCTOBER, 1906

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DORCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OFFICERS

1906—1907

President, RICHARD C. HUMPHREYS

Vice-President, JAMES H. STARK

Secretary and Treasurer, JOHN A. FOWLE

DIRECTORS

EDW'D A. HUEBNER
THOS. F. TEMPLE
EUGENE R. SHIPPEN
EDW'D W. McGLENNAN
JAMES H. STARK
JOHN A. FOWLE

DORCHESTER, Sept. 15, 1906.

RICHARD C. HUMPHREYS, ESQ.,
President Dorchester Historical Society.

Dear Sir,—We desire to present to the "DORCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY" for safe keeping some relics of the Civil War that came into our possession about forty years ago, as the result of services given by us for the benefit of Soldiers in Washington, D.C.

In desiring to preserve them for the information of future generations, we know of no more appropriate place than with your Society, especially as DORCHESTER was so deeply interested in and did so much to aid us in our work.

Should there be in the future any change in your Society or in the occupancy of the Old Blake House, we request that the collection be deposited with the "NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY," or any organization that will care for the collection.

We beg that these relics as per enclosed Catalogue may be received and cared for in the same patriotic spirit in which they are given.

We are, Very truly yours,

JOHN A. FOWLE.
ELIDA R. FOWLE.

Mr. and Mrs. John A. Fowle,
Dorchester, Mass.

Dear Friends,—I have read with great interest the catalogue of the various things you offer to give to the Dorchester Historical Society to be placed in the Blake House.

It seems to me quite appropriate that our Society should take charge of these things, as Dorchester people were so deeply interested in the work the memory of which these objects perpetuate.

As President of the Dorchester Historical Society, I accept with great pleasure these objects, and assure you that they will be carefully cared for and treasured as a memorial of your valuable services in behalf of the soldiers of the Civil War.

I note your suggestion in regard to the disposal of these objects in case of any change in our Society, and shall do my best to see that your wishes in the matter are respected.

Thanking you both personally, as well as for the Society,

I am sincerely yours,

RICHARD C. HUMPHREYS,
President Dorchester Historical Society.

LIST OF CIVIL WAR RELICS

PRESENTED TO THE

"DORCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY"

AND DEPOSITED IN THE

OLD BLAKE HOUSE

BY

MR. AND MRS. JOHN A. FOWLE
OF UPHAM'S CORNER, DORCHESTER.

for the purpose of preserving some mementoes of the war period between 1862 and 1864, when the donors resided in Washington, D.C., Mr. Fowle being connected with the Navy Department, thus affording an opportunity to give their services for the benefit of sick and wounded soldiers, particulars of which are found in Frank Moore's "WOMEN OF THE WAR," the "AMERICAN SERIES OF BIOGRAPHIES: MASSACHUSETTS," Holland's "ARMY NURSES," and other books.

No. 1.

SMITH ORGAN.

This organ was used in 1862, 1863, and 1864 on Sunday mornings, in the House of Representatives, at Religious and Patriotic Services conducted by Rev. Dr. Stockton, Chaplain of the House. It was taken there and returned each week in an ambulance. The organ was paid for from the proceeds of a patriotic concert given in Willard's Hall.

It was used by Mr. and Mrs. Fowle during each week in the

Soldiers' Free Library and in Hospitals and Camps in and around Washington. Being made to fold up, it could be easily conveyed any distance. Soldiers were allowed to use it, and many availed themselves of the privilege.

No. 2.

SOLDIER'S CHAIR.

Made by a soldier from hard-tack boxes. He was a member of the 1st Delaware Battery at Camp Barry on the Heights, near Washington. He gave it to the Library, saying it would do for a seat in playing the organ.

No. 3.

LAND FROM CONGRESS.

Framed copy of the Joint Resolutions of the Senate and House of Representatives, approved by President Lincoln Jan. 13, 1863.

This copy is signed by President Lincoln and Secretary Seward, Mrs. Fowle (then Miss Rumsey) taking it to the White House, and at her request each signed it.

The original Act, engrossed on parchment, is in the Archives of the State Department at Washington. It grants to John A. Fowle and Elida B. Rumsey land in Judiciary Square on which to erect the Soldiers' Free Library.

Nos. 4 and 5.

SOLDIERS' FREE LIBRARY.

Two Pictures.

The Library was started in the early part of 1862. Rooms were hired on Fifth Street, near the City Hall, from which books and supplies were distributed. It was soon found that the quarters were entirely inadequate for the needs of the Library. Mr. and Mrs. Fowle, with their friends, decided

to erect a building of the proper size. The plans and efforts were crowned with success, and in one year from the founding of the Library the building was erected in Judiciary Square, 5th and E Streets. The pictures were drawn and painted by soldiers. The Library Building was paid for from the proceeds of concerts given in Washington and other places, also by donations from soldiers' friends in Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut.

It was dedicated March 1, 1863, on Mr. and Mrs. Fowle's wedding day, and conducted by them free of expense. The United States government furnished a convalescent soldier to act as librarian and assistant.

The Library was provided with about 6,000 books from Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, Boston, New York, Norwich, Conn., and other places. Newspapers and magazines were sent by the publishers, all without cost.

In the building was a room for supplies sent by soldiers' friends.

A table was provided with fixtures for soldiers to write letters. They were given paper, pens, and ink and stamps free. The books were covered with paper presented by Mayor Rice, of Boston. Books were loaned to soldiers under an agreement to be returned in ten days, and very few books were lost.

The government furnished daily an ambulance and driver with which Mrs. Fowle visited the hospitals and camps in and around Washington to distribute books, papers, and supplies. In May, 1863, the number of hospitals and camps was SIXTY-TWO, and they sheltered THIRTY-FOUR THOUSAND sick and wounded soldiers, including convalescents.

The American Tract Society of Boston furnished thousands of copies of the SOLDIER HYMN BOOK, and a newspaper called the SOLDIERS' BANNER, also large supplies of their publications. From the Boston branch of the Bible Society for free distribution the Library was supplied with many Bibles and Testaments.

The reading-room had a seating capacity of about 150.

In it were held Sabbath services, conducted by city pastors, chaplains, and soldiers, also various meetings in the interests of soldiers. The room was tastefully decorated with pictures donated by Williams & Everett, J. H. Bufford, A. A. Childs, and others of Boston.

An account was kept of the distribution from the Library and storeroom. For the year of 1862 and 1863, ending in June, 1863, the time when there were calls for all kinds of supplies, when every hospital, the Rotunda at the Capitol, and many churches were filled with sick and wounded soldiers, when the SANITARY COMMISSION and other organizations were taxed to their utmost to furnish supplies at the front and in the Hospitals, the SOLDIERS' FREE LIBRARY was very busy in its work, as will be seen by the following statement of its distribution. There were given out during this period: shirts, 2,150; drawers, 1,495; towels, 763; sheets, 224; gowns, 285; coats, 85; trousers, 158; waistcoats, 148; slippers, 679; bandages in rolls, 9 barrels; lint, 6 barrels; fans, 900; pocket handkerchiefs, 4,000 to 5,000; cologne, 422 bottles; socks, 320 pairs; postage stamps, 1,390; writing paper, 25 reams; envelopes, 9,000; Testaments and Bibles, 2,370; magazines and books (given away), 1,675; singing-books, several thousand; of the *Christian Banner*, Soldiers' Directory, *Tract Journal*, Tracts, pictorial papers,—there must have been 35,000 to 40,000. There was also given out farina, cornstarch, cocoa, chocolate, wines, jellies, brandy, etc.

On top of the library-room and the supply-room, were stacked piles of crutches and canes made at the Navy Yard. Hundreds of them were given to the soldiers, and this department was much appreciated.

The cash receipts were about $1,500 from concerts and donations, which were expended in the Library Building and for soldiers.

After the war the books were given to the Young Men's Christian Association, and the building and contents to the Freedman's Bureau.

No. 6.

LIBRARY RECORD BOOKS.

They contain signatures of thousands of soldiers taking books out of the Library, visiting the reading-room, or getting supplies. There are also catalogues of portions of the Library showing the selections made of many of the books donated.

Magazines and some of the books were not catalogued for lack of time.

No. 7.

PICTURES.

Many pictures were donated by soldiers' friends, and hung in the hall of the Library. There were pictures of President Lincoln, General Sherman, Grant, Sheridan, and others.

"A DRILL 50 YEARS AGO" always amused the soldiers, it being a picture of a yearly custom on the last day of the Militia drills in "ye olden days."

Photographs of the Voters in Congress in Favor of the 14TH AMENDMENT abolishing Slavery. It is a very rare picture, as fire destroyed the plates after the first edition was printed.

When the Library Building was given to the Freedman's Bureau these pictures were reserved.

No. 8.

CONFEDERATE FLAG.

Captured at Island No. 10 by Admiral Foote. Presented to the Library by Admiral Davis.

No. 9.

CONTRABAND'S DRESS.

Taken from a former slave girl sent to Washington by General Butler. She was one of about a thousand contrabands, the first sent from Virginia to Washington. They were given

tents by the government, and camped at Arlington, Va., on General Lee's estate. They were fed and cared for under the charge of Surgeon Webster and wife, of Connecticut. The Library furnished them with a quantity of supplies. They were finally sent North.

No. 10.

HOSPITAL'S PICTURE BOOKS.

Two books of pictures, the smaller one arranged in Dorchester, the other made and used in COLUMBIA COLLEGE HOSPITAL from a doctor's diary book. The Library had a number of these books in use in the several hospitals during the war. They were much appreciated by the sick soldiers.

No. 11.

SHOT AND SHELL.

The solid shot was thrown from Bolivar Heights into Harper's Ferry. The other specimens were gathered by Mr. and Mrs. Fowle on the battlefields of Bull Run, Gettysburg, Antietam, and South Mountain.

No. 12.

BIBLE, ETC.

From the battlefield of Bull Run (2d battle), the knife, fork, and spoon from the same source, collected by Mr. and Mrs. Fowle the last day of the battle.

No. 13.

LETTERS, ETC.

In this book will be found letters and reading matter referring to the war, to soldiers and their supplies; also invoices of many of the books and articles sent to the Library.

Letters from Rev. Nathaniel Hall, of the Meeting-house Hill Church, Rev. Dr. Means, of the Second Church, Hon. Marshall P. Wilder, Rev. T. T. Munger, Edward G. Porter, also from many ladies and children who gave much of their time in collecting books, funds, and supplies for the benefit of sick and wounded soldiers. There are also chaplains and soldiers' letters, and various matters pertaining to the war.

No. 14.

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS.

Passes and other papers connected with the war.

No. 15.

WRITING-DESK.

Used in hospitals to write soldiers' letters on. It was carried round to many hospitals, furnished with pens, ink, envelopes, paper, and stamps. Hundreds of letters were written on it.

No. 16.

HISTORIES OF THE WAR.

Life of General Scott.
Potomac and Rapidan.
General Butler in New Orleans.
Lossing's Civil War, 3 volumes.
Holland's Our Army Nurses.
Nurse and Spy.
Frank Moore's Women of the War.
Grant and his Campaigns.
Four Years of Fighting.
Campaign in Virginia.

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Four Years in Seccessia.
Records. Second Massachusetts Infantry.
Army of the Potomac.
Field. Dungeon and Escape.
Scott's Military Dictionary.
Incidents of the Civil War.
And other books.

Manchester Historical Society
Ye Old Blake House
—1648—